



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL**

ON

THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2015

AT

8.00PM

AGENDA

**Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire**

**Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive**



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

To: The Members of the Wokingham Borough Council

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held at the Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham on **Thursday 19 February 2015 at 8.00pm.**

Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive
11 February 2015

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
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61.00		MINUTES	1-26
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To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 20 November 2014 (*pages 1-24*) and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 16 January 2015 (*pages 25-26*).

62.00		APOLOGIES	
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To receive any apologies for absence.

63.00		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
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To receive any declarations of interest.

64.00		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
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To answer any public questions.
A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.

The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of the Council.

Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Council or an item which is on the Agenda for this

meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions

Explanatory leaflets are also available in the Civic Offices and Libraries.

65.00

PETITIONS

To receive any petitions which Members or members of the public wish to present.

66.00

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements by the Mayor.

67.00

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND ASSOCIATED REPORTS

67.01

None Specific

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2015/18

To consider the recommendations of the Executive in respect of the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2015/18.

The report submitted to the Executive is attached, **(pages 27-37)**

RECOMMENDATION: Council be recommended to approve:

- 1) the Housing Revenue Account Budget;
- 2) Council house dwelling rents be increased by an average 3.34% effective from 1 April 2015;
- 3) garage rents be increased by 2.4% effective from 1 April 2015;
- 4) it be noted that a review of the Shared Equity Rents in 2011 had determined that rents had been kept artificially low in previous years and not increased in line with the terms of the leases. Therefore rents for shared equity properties will gradually increase above inflation for four years to bring the rents in line by 1 April 2016. The increase for 2015/16 will be between 6% and 13% (£3 and £11 per month) depending on the property;
- 5) Tenant Service Charges are set in line with estimated costs;
- 6) the Housing Major Repairs (capital) programme for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix C.

67.02 None Specific **CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND STRATEGY 2015/18**
To consider the recommendation of the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme 2015/18.

The report submitted to the Executive is attached.
(pages 38-49)

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve the Capital Programme and Strategy for 2015/18.

67.03 None Specific **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015/18**
To consider the recommendations of the Executive in respect of the Treasury Management Strategy 2015/18.

The report submitted to the Executive is attached.
(pages 50-85)

RECOMMENDATION: Council is recommended to approve the following:

- 1) the Capital Prudential indicators, 2015/16-2017/18;
- 2) the borrowing strategy 2015/16;
- 3) the Annual Investment Strategy 2015/16; and
- 4) the Treasury Indicators: limits to borrowing activity 2015/16.

67.04 None Specific **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/18 – REVENUE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2015/16**
To consider the recommendations of the Executive in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/18 and Budget Submission and Council Tax for 2015/16.

The report submitted to the Executive is attached
(pages 86-89)

RECOMMENDATION: Council is recommended to approve:

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2015/2018, including the revenue budget submission for 2015/16;
- 2) the Statutory Resolution that sets out the 2015/16 council tax levels (Appendix A);
- 3) that in the event that there are any changes to the provisional precept of the Fire Authority, arising from their precept setting meeting being

held on 23 February, the Director of Finance and Resources is delegated authority to enact all relevant changes to the MTFP, Statutory Resolution and council tax levels.

- 68.00** None Specific **HOUSING STRATEGY 2015-18**
To consider the recommendation of the Executive in respect of the adoption of the Housing Strategy
- The report submitted to the Executive is attached **(pages 90-125)**
- RECOMMENDATION:** Council is recommended to adopt the Housing Strategy 2015-18.
- 69.00** None Specific **ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) CHARGING SCHEDULE**
To consider the recommendations of the Executive in respect of the adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule.
- The report submitted to the Executive is attached **(pages 126-152)**
- RECOMMENDATION:** That Council endorse the following:
- 1) that the Examiner's recommendations be accepted by the Council;
 - 2) that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule at Appendix A (incorporating the Examiner's recommended modifications) be adopted to come into effect for all planning applications approved on or after 6th April 2015.
 - 3) that the 'Regulation 123' List of Infrastructure Projects for which CIL may be used at Appendix B be approved for publication;
 - 4) that the Instalment Policy at Appendix C be approved for publication;
 - 5) that the use of agreements (or other mechanism) to secure CIL in relation to mitigation measures required in order to make the development acceptable and to ensure that the Council complies with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (in relation to the requirements of the Birds and Habitats Directive) be agreed;

- 6) that the Strategic Director of Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Highways, be authorised to agree minor amendments to the Charging Schedule and supporting documents prior to publication to assist the clarity of the documents.

70.00 None Specific **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2014-5**

To consider the recommendations of the Executive in respect of the mid-year Treasury Management report for 2014-5.

The report submitted to the Executive is attached **(pages 153-177)**

RECOMMENDATION: Council is recommended to approve the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2014-2015.

71.00 None Specific **CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

To consider proposed changes to the Constitution as put forward by the Constitution Review Working Group.

The report from the Constitution Review Working Group is attached **(pages 178-211)**

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approves the following amendments to the relevant sections of the Council's Constitution, as put forward by the Constitution Review Working Group:

- 1) Section 4.2.2.1 – Timing and Order of Business
The following to be added to the Council's order of business:

 “o) *to receive statements from the Council Owned Companies.*”
- 2) Chapter 4.4 – Committees of the Council – Audit Committee

 A number of minor amendments as set out in the report.
- 3) Chapter 5.4 – Executive Procedure Rules
Rule 5.4.37 to be amended as follows:

 “**Rule 5.4.37 Scope of Questions**
 The Chief Executive and/or Leader may reject a question if it: ...”

4) Chapter 8.4.2 Meetings of the Licensing and Appeals Committee

First sentence to be amended as follows:

*“The Licensing and Appeals Committee shall meet **at least four** times per municipal year, as scheduled in the Timetable of Meetings, as agreed by Council.”*

5) Section 9 – Ethics and Corporate Governance

Revised versions of the following documents as attached at Appendix A to the report:

Chapter 9.4 – Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy

Chapter 9.5 – Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance

Chapter 9.6 – Anti Bribery Policy

Chapter 9.7 – Anti Money Laundering Policy

Chapter 9.8 – Prosecution and Sanction Policy

72.00 None Specific

TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2015/16

To consider the proposed Timetable of Meetings for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

A copy of the Timetable of Meetings is attached (**page 212**)

RECOMMENDATION: That the timetable of meetings for the 2015/16 Municipal Year be agreed.

73.00 Emmbrook

OUTCOME OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT

As a result of a complaint received from a member of the public about Councillor Chris Singleton an investigation was conducted into the matter.

A Hearings Panel met on 16 December 2014 and determined that Councillor Singleton had failed to follow the Wokingham Borough Council Code of Conduct and decided to formally censure the Member in writing.

In accordance with Rule 9.1.19.3 of the Constitution the decision notice was published on the Council’s website on 23 December 2014. The Constitution also requires that the matter is reported to the next meeting of the Council. In relation to this complaint there is no further action required.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council notes that Councillor Chris Singleton was found to be in breach of the Member Code of Conduct.

This is an agenda for a meeting of the Council.

If you need help in understanding this document or if you would like a copy of it in large print please contact one of our Administrators.

CONTACT OFFICERS

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2014 FROM 7.30PM TO 10.30PM**

Present:- Mark Ashwell, Keith Baker, Chris Bowring, Prue Bray, David Chopping, UllaKarin Clark, Gary Cowan, Michael Firmager, Lindsay Ferris, Guy Grandison, Mike Haines, John Halsall, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Tim Holton, Philip Houldsworth, Nicky Jerrome, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, John Kaiser, Dianne King, David Lee, Abdul Loyes, Tom McCann, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Ken Miall, Philip Mirfin, Bob Pitts, Ian Pittock, Anthony Pollock, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Chris Singleton, Wayne Smith, Bill Soane, Rob Stanton, Alison Swaddle, Dee Tomlin, Simon Weeks, Bob Wyatt and Shahid Younis

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Alison Swaddle, newly elected Member for Bulmershe and Whitegates Ward.

44. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 September 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor subject to the following amendment proposed by Councillor Prue Bray.

In Minute 31 insert the following sentence after Councillor Tom McCann's declaration of interest:

"The following declarations were made during Agenda Item 40."

45. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Alistair Auty, Parry Batth, Kay Gilder, Mike Gore, Kate Haines, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Stuart Munro, Barrie Patman, Nick Ray, Beth Rowland, David Sleight and Paul Swaddle.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Keith Baker declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 47.00 Petitions on the grounds that he was due to become a trustee for the Lilly-May Trust.

Councillor Tom McCann declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that his daughter was employed by a company involved with the Wokingham town centre regeneration project.

Councillor Tom McCann declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 44.00 Presentation by the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police Sara Thornton on the grounds that his daughter was formerly a Special Constable in the area.

Following a number of Councillors declaring an interest due to the fact that they were School Governors and/or Parish and Town councillors, Councillor Keith Baker requested a ruling as to whether those Councillors were actually required to declare an interest at the meeting. It was clarified that it was not a requirement for those Councillors to declare an interest.

47. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Mayor invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

47.01 Question

Shaun Hanna asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Given all the additional housing in Emmbrook, Arborfield and Shinfield and the additional traffic that this will generate, can you please update me on the progress of the Winnersh Relief Road?

Answer

The Winnersh Relief Road will be delivered as two projects. One of these between King Street Lane and Lower Earley Way is an integral part of a planning application for development on the Hatch Farm Dairies site. The scheme has planning permission. Delivery of this section is therefore dependent upon the developer and we are in discussions to try and accelerate the plans.

The section of the Winnersh Relief Road between Wokingham Road and King Street Lane is being managed by the Council. Preliminary work is being undertaken on the scheme with a view to progressing designs to submit a planning application. We will complete the preliminary feasibility work soon and start work on the design for the scheme in the new year with a proposal coming forward for planning permission some time in 2016/17.

Officers have recently met with local councillors to explain the changes being proposed to the traffic lights at Winnersh. We will continue to monitor this junction and where we can make changes that are safe, bearing in mind there have been fatalities there in the past, and are likely to improve the traffic flow, we will endeavour to implement them.

Supplementary Question

I understand that you have said that the designs will come for planning permission in 2016/17, so we are not likely to see any work starting within the next three years, is that right?

Supplementary Answer

Yes, you are right there. The only thing I would say to you is that we are working with local residents and also local councillors to see what we can do in the short term to improve that junction but as I said, whatever we do must be safe.

47.02 Question

David Hare asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Many residents across the Borough have contacted the Liberal Democrats to express their concern and frustration at the number of motorists who appear to drive their cars at excessive speeds around our roads.

In order to see if the Council's traffic calming measures are working effectively will you re-introduce the collection of speeding data from VAS units that are deployed around the Borough that was cancelled by your predecessor?

Answer

We are committed to road safety and work closely with the Police to improve the safety of road users across the network. Where safety concerns are identified we will investigate and report back to local Members and residents. That will also include Neighbourhood Action Groups. If speed is believed to be an issue then Council uses properly calibrated speed measuring loops. The data from these can be shared with those local Members and residents. Inevitably there is a cost to these investigations and we need to spend the Council's budget wisely. The cost associated with managing data from Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) did not represent good value for money and the Head of Service made the decision to stop collecting it. To give you a bit of the background, some of the VAS units do not record numbers of activations but the total number of vehicles passing and an estimate of the speed of vehicles. The devices are not calibrated and as such the data is not always reliable. The Council would be more than happy to help local NAGs set up a community speedwatch programme that would allow them to use calibrated speed measuring devices, monitoring numbers of speeding drivers and then reporting them to the Police.

Supplementary Question

I understand that you are saying that some of the information is not accurate and some of the information is too expensive to tell the public but given the open, transparency and honesty of these the Council purports to champion, why is it that the general public is not allowed much of this information?

Supplementary Answer

You will be allowed that information.

47.03 Question

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Is there funding available to build the Northern Distributor Road in Wokingham without the 300 extra houses that were announced on the 21st October at the North and South Wokingham SDL Forum?

Answer

Developers' contributions will form a substantial part of the cost of the build of the North Wokingham Distributor Road and these are being sought from developments as they come forward. In addition the Council has already been successful in securing an indicative £24m loan Growth Funding through the Local Economic Partnership towards the distributor roads and some of this will be put towards the northern Wokingham Distributor Road.

We have yet to complete the work to determine the best route for the full northern distributor road and as such we cannot report an accurate cost for its construction.

Whilst the delivery of the Northern Wokingham Distributor Road is not dependent upon the development at Keepeatch Beech, which has not got planning permission currently, coming forward this additional development could free up the money to make further improvements to roads in the area. In addition to this, this is an opportunity to deliver the road a lot earlier, which will mean it will be a lot less inconvenience for the residents. On top of that there will be environmental issues such as a new bund which will protect from

the noise. As you will probably know the noise from the A329M, being a concrete motorway, is pretty poor, which will help existing residents.

Supplementary Question

If so then why have people come away from these meetings with the informed impression from these Forums that the Council has got enough money to fund these roads already?

Supplementary Answer

If I could look inside their head I could tell you.

48. PRESENTATION BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF THAMES VALLEY POLICE SARA THORNTON

The Council received a presentation from Sara Thornton, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police about Thames Valley Police and Wokingham Borough. In her presentation the Chief Constable referred to the July Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Review which was a comment on how the Force had been dealing with significant savings so far in the spending review period. The Council was also informed of the objectives of the Delivery Plan.

Following the presentation, Members asked a number of questions relating to:

- the Police's work to reduce drug abuse in Thames Valley and Wokingham in particular;
- the issuing of a warning or caution to a landlord, publican or club owner in the Borough for selling alcohol to a person who is or may be intoxicated;
- anti-speeding work from the Police on the Spine Road at Woosehill;
- the possibility of putting speed traps in place on Old Forest Road, between the single track rail bridge and Toutley Depot;
- the future of Twyford Police Station;
- more effective joint working to limit the potential for child abuse;
- parking issues in the Borough;
- cycling and ;
- the implications for the Borough of arrangements for Multi agency service hubs in Berkshire.

The Chief Constable answered these questions at the meeting.

Members thanked the Chief Constable for her presentation.

49. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR LEGISLATION

The Council received a presentation, from Jenny Bennett, Anti-Social Behaviour and Family First Manager, regarding how the process for the Community Trigger, one of the new Anti-social Behaviour Powers contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act, would work.

50. PETITIONS

The following member of the public presented a petition in relation to the matter indicated.

The Mayor's decision as to the action to be taken is set out against each petition.

Mr Mark Hall	Petition regarding traffic in and around Honey Hill, Wokingham Without <i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Planning and Highways</i>
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51. PETITION

A petition had been submitted to Democratic Services on 7 November 2014 which contained nearly 5,000 signatures; which was over the threshold to trigger a debate at Council.

The petition stated:

"AED in All Schools – (Automated External Defibrillator)

After the recent devastating and tragic death of my daughter Lilly-May at Willow Bank Infant School it has been brought to my attention the amount of cardiac arrests that happen in schools and lack of defibrillators fitted in schools. We are currently still waiting for results but the fitting of defibrillators in all schools and eventually every public place is something that could save your child.

There are 270 cardiac arrests in UK schools each year. The current chance of surviving an SCA (Sudden Cardiac Arrest) in UK is only 6% but immediate access to a defibrillator can raise this chance to 74%.

I therefore believe strongly that defibrillators should be mandatory in all schools. This should be a piece of compulsory health and safety equipment fitted in all schools."

In presenting the petition Claire Page and Rory Davies commented that:

- Lily-May had died from Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome. Arrhythmias could be undetected and could cause a sudden cardiac arrest at any age and at any time. The fitting of defibrillators in all schools and other public places was something which could save other children's lives;
- There were 270 cardiac arrests in schools in the UK each year and the current chance of surviving a sudden cardiac arrest in the UK was only 6% but immediate access to a defibrillator could raise this chance to 74%;
- It was believed that defibrillators should be a compulsory piece of health and safety equipment fitted in all schools;
- Rory Davies stated that he had attended over a thousand resuscitations and of these only one person had been saved. The main reason for this was the time between collapse and the arrival of the Emergency Services. According to South Central Ambulance Service statistics, ambulances should reach Category A calls within 8 minutes. In Lily-May's case the Ambulance Service had arrived within 9 ½ minutes;
- There was about 10 minutes to do something with the rhythm of someone's heart after they went into cardiac arrest. After 10 minutes if nothing was done with regards to changing that rhythm it could lead to certain death;
- Every minute that someone was in cardiac arrest they lost 10% chance of survival. The footballer Fabrice Muamba had been defibrillated within 3 minutes and had survived;
- It was not a question of how to get defibrillators out into the community but when.

Members of the Council then debated the petition. A summary of the comments is presented below:

Guy Grandison commented:

- Every week there were 12 deaths from young sudden cardiac death, around 624 a year;
- Screening had increased but needed to be increased further;

Prue Bray commented:

- Defibrillators used to be expensive and difficult to use properly but good quality defibrillators could now be purchased for approximately £1,000 and could be operated by most people following step-by-step instructions;
- Training on defibrillator use was available;
- A number of schools in the country already had defibrillators. She was a governor at The Forest School which was looking at acquiring a defibrillator. Earlier in the month sixth formers had been offered free electro cardiograms to try to pick up undiagnosed heart conditions. It had been paid for by the Trust set up by the family of Ben Birch, a former pupil of the school who had died last year aged 29 of Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome
- She was also a Winnersh Parish councillor. Winnersh Parish Council's Recreation and Amenities Committee was considering the purchase of a defibrillator because a lot of people attended community events at the community centre and sports pitches;
- The Council could not make the provision of a defibrillator in each school mandatory but it could encourage schools to do so and consider how it could facilitate the process, perhaps through a bulk buy deal.

Pauline Helliard-Symons commented:

- Defibrillators were becoming more common and more people were learning to use them;
- At the end of September all but one fire engine of the local Fire and Rescue Service, had a defibrillator on board. It was possible that all engines were now equipped with a defibrillator. 387 people in the Fire Service had received defibrillator training.
- It made sense for schools to have defibrillators. They had epi pens which also saved lives;
- Teachers should not be worried about unintentionally using a defibrillator incorrectly as they came with instructions and were fail safe;
- The Council could not force schools to take action but the Borough had 4 MPs, one of whom was a doctor and one a Cabinet Minister. She suggested that the MPs also be contacted;
- Senior officers particularly those working with schools should do all they could to encourage schools to fit defibrillators and to train staff to use them.

Tom McCann commented:

- Some Members were also governors and Town and Parish Councillors. The Council should lead from the front to help the community;
- The fitting of defibrillators in schools fitted with the Council's new wellbeing responsibilities.

Rob Stanton commented:

- He had visited every school in the Borough including Willow Bank and was aware just how much the teachers and staff protected the children each day;
- He had asked his local schools whether they would support the introduction of a defibrillator and they had welcomed the initiative;
- Training and ongoing maintenance was vital but necessary.

Mike Haines commented:

- Sonning Parish Council had installed a defibrillator in a phone box outside Pearsons Hall. It had cost approximately £1500 plus installation fees. The biggest concerns that the Parish Council had had was that the defibrillator could be used inappropriately or accidentally. However, this was virtually impossible as there were safety locks and other systems in place;
- In an emergency you could be given advice over the phone on how to use the equipment;
- Ongoing costs for the defibrillator were very little;
- The Parish Council was looking to install a second defibrillator in the primary school in Sonning.

Ian Pittock commented:

- He had worked on the matter with officers in his capacity as Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services. Some schools already had automated versions of these devices and had provided these from their own funds. Other schools in Berkshire were also installing defibrillators;
- Some Town and Parish Councils were installing defibrillators in publicly accessible areas;
- Devices located in schools would only be accessible within school hours. A community device approach between the Council, Parish Councils and Schools would result in a higher and faster rate of implementation. No one solution would work in all cases. Each school and Parish Council needed to be involved in deciding a local solution;
- He saw the Council as being able to act as a central purchaser to ensure bulk discounts and thereby reducing the unit price;
- The Council could and would act to facilitate discussions to see what could be achieved;
- The Council had recently completed a review into the need for defibrillators.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Mayor invited the petition organisers to exercise their right of reply which was undertaken by Rory Davies. He commented that:

- Members had given a great and logical response;
- South Central Ambulance Service had a smartphone app called 'AED Locator UK' which picked up your GPS location and told you where your nearest defibrillator was located;
- Unfortunately defibrillators were often purchased in hindsight and it was important to buy them in foresight;
- It was vital to educate people in the importance of defibrillators.

The Mayor then invited Motions as to how the Council wished to respond to the petition.

The following proposal was put forward by Ian Pittock and seconded by Pauline Helliars-Symons:

"This Council firmly believes that defibrillators should be strongly encouraged in all schools. This should be an essential piece of health and safety equipment fitted in all schools."

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That this Council firmly believes that defibrillators should be strongly encouraged in all schools. This should be an essential piece of health and safety equipment fitted in all schools.

52. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed Members of the Heritage Memorial Trail which linked all the War Memorials in the Borough and advised Members to visit the exhibition stands located in the Mall. The Trail had officially been launched on Heritage Day and was an excellent example of all the Borough community, including the Town and Parish Councils and Churches coming together, to honour the sacrifice of local people. She thanked everyone involved in the project, particularly Jan Nowecki who had coordinated the Trail.

53. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER AND RESULTING CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE

The Council considered the Report of the Returning Officer and Resulting Changes to the Council's Political Balance as set out within the Agenda.

It was proposed by Pauline Jorgensen and seconded by Guy Grandison that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED That:

- 1) it be noted that Alison Swaddle has been elected as the ward member for Bulmershe and Whitegates until May 2016;
- 2) having reviewed the representation of the political groups on the Council, as a result of the by-election, Council confirmed that it had 45 Conservative Group Members, 7 Liberal Democrat Group Members 2 Independent Labour Group Members (made up of 1 Independent Member and 1 Labour Member) (as set out in Para 2.4);
- 3) the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards be approved on the basis that, of the 94 seats (as set out in Para 2.5), 78 be allocated to the Conservative Group, 12 be allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group and 4 be allocated to the Independent Labour Group;
- 4) the proposal from the Conservative Group Leader to appoint Alison Swaddle to the seat on the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which has changed parties as a result of the change in political balance, be approved.

54. COUNCIL PLAN 2014-17

The Council considered the Council Plan 2014-17 as set out within the Agenda.

Keith Baker commented that the Plan was very readable and captured the Council's Vision, Principles and Priorities for delivery of Council services. It was anticipated that the first annual report would be produced in May to show progress made.

Julian McGhee-Sumner emphasised that the document was clear, concise and easy to read.

Tom McCann commented that he felt that the Plan should also include the views of the Towns and Parish Councils. Keith Baker responded that the Town and Parish Councils were key to the future and that reference had been made in the Plan to working closely with them.

It was proposed by Keith Baker and seconded by Julian McGhee-Sumner that the Council Plan 2014-17 be approved.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council Plan 2014-2017 be approved.

55. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2014-17

The Council considered the Wokingham Borough Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-17 as set out within the Agenda.

Prue Bray referred Members to the Plan on a Page within the Strategy which condensed the Health and Wellbeing Strategy down a single page for ease of viewing. She went on to highlight some of the learning from the first year of operation and to remind Members that it was now the second year of having a Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a Health and Wellbeing Board.

Angus Ross commented that he was pleased to see some of the work carried out in relation to exercise, set out in the Strategy.

Lindsay Ferris commented that whilst the Strategy referred to children's mental health in some detail there was little reference to adults' mental health and in particular the emergency service available when there were problems with people's medication.

Tom McCann commented that more work needed to be done to help communities understand the Council's new health and wellbeing responsibilities.

Simon Weeks emphasised that Wokingham had recently been announced as having the lowest level of smoking in the UK. He was disappointed that the positive impact of health walks had not been highlighted in the Strategy.

John Kaiser commented that the Strategy linked well with the new sports facilities and cycleways which were being provided in the Borough.

Bob Wyatt praised the Strategy and highlighted the work undertaken with carers.

It was proposed by Julian McGhee-Sumner and seconded by Bob Wyatt that the Wokingham Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-17 be approved.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Wokingham Borough Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2014-2017 be approved.

56. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Council considered a report, as set out in the Agenda, which gave details of proposed changes to the Council's Constitution as recommended by the Constitution Review Working Group. The report detailed various proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution.

It was proposed by Pauline Jorgensen and seconded by Prue Bray that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED That:

1) the following amendments to the relevant sections of the Council's Constitution, as put forward by the Constitution Review Working Group be agreed:

(a) revised Chapter 3.6 Filming and Recording Protocol as set out in Appendix A to the report;

(b) Chapter 4.4 – Committees of the Council – Health and Wellbeing Board

Rules 4.4.23g) and 4.4.25 to be amended to state that three representatives from the Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group be appointed to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

(c) Chapter 12.2 – Procurement and Contract Regulations

The following wording to be added to Rule 12.2.1.1:

“For all Service contracts with a value in excess of the EU threshold and all works contracts over £1m the contractor and its supply chain will be required to actively participate in the achievement of social objectives relating to the participation in skills development, employment and training programmes in accordance with Wokingham Borough Council's Employment and Skills Guidance for Tenders, which can be found on the Council's website.”

2) those sections of the Constitution which are due to be reviewed in the forthcoming months and which, if agreed by the Constitution Review Working Group, will come forward to Council for consideration at either the February or March meetings be noted.

57. STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

David Chopping, Non-Executive Director of Wokingham Housing Limited

Last week I had the pleasure of presenting the Eustace/Phoenix proposals to the Planning Committee. A planning application actually popular with the neighbouring property, which makes a very pleasant change. Those of you who note what is happening in the planning world will be aware that this is the second major development made by Wokingham Housing Limited, the first being Fosters last month. Both applications were approved and we now move on to the next stage which is to finalise the internal detail and reserve matters. Never letting the grass grow under our feet, the Board have already agreed a process which complies with OJEU requirements for the appointment of employer's agent's services, that is quantity surveyors to you and me, and the HCA DPP2 Framework, agreement for the procurement of building contractors for the development of larger sites. As a result we hope to be on site sometime in late spring next year with it our intention to have completed the developments before the end of 2016, but we are in the hands of suppliers and contractors, which of course in the building game means that they have the final say on timings sometimes.

Some eleven other schemes are moving towards the planning process, mainly using local architects for design and planning. These are all much smaller and we are actively seeking larger sites. We are also in the early stages of the process for our subsidiary, Loddon Homes, to become a registered provider to take advantage of other sources of grant funding. It is our intention to put together a Shadow Board to meet with HCA requirements for transparency and perceived independence. We are a new entity for them to consider and we are very pleased to have as our guiding consultant, David Williams, who has done this sort of thing before and as it is complicated we are very glad.

As to the future, one necessity of success in this field is to keep the ball rolling and not to lose momentum. Completing one task before starting another is a recipe for failure. Rather, we have to create an effective pipeline with a series of sites at varying stages so that they come on-stream at reasonable intervals. Capital funding, commuted sums and grants for our present schemes are identified. However, if the scheme is to be allowed to be a success then proper funding must and I repeat must, be made available. Commuted sums at some stage in the future are not enough on their own. Investment funding has to be included in the forthcoming Capital Programme or the company will die, which is a wasted opportunity.

I should also like to compliment the staff at WHL involved in all these process it has been a team effort to achieve so much so fast. We put together a small and highly professional team. I would particularly like to mention our Managing Director, Robin Fielder without whose expertise and patience we would not be here now. Robin has worked on these schemes ever since his arrival at WHL. He has navigated the company's progress through the myriad threads of internal committee processes and vested interests. Unfortunately he is retiring in the new year. We will all miss his input and relaxed authority. It has been a pleasure to work alongside him. The process to appoint his successor is already in hand, the post advertised and a number of enquiries already received. I will keep Council informed of progress, hopefully with the appointment of his successor early in the new year.

Angus Ross, Executive Member for Environment

There are a few items that I would like to update Council on. Firstly, we have recently been presented with petitions here relating to both grass cutting and glass collection. I have to be careful with my glass and my grass. With Officers I have met with the lead petitioners and helpful discussions and useful ideas have come out, which we will consider as these matters are reviewed. The grass cutting consultation period is still running and we have had an encouraging response, giving us a good sounding board for the ongoing review of this service.

Next on, Dinton Pastures. We have all heard what a success the new children's play area has been and I am delighted that the designers have now been nominated for an award. This was with the British Association of Landscape Industries, an organisation who recognises excellence in landscape design, construction and maintenance and such things are apparently attended by up to 700 industry professionals. Because of the success of our play area, it has taken a greater strain than predicted, and as I have reported before over the winter we will be working to make it more robust and back into the condition it was in when it was opened last May. I really must stress this action is essentially because of the success and the amount of use of the area, although some maintenance will always be necessary to such areas. Work is likely to start early December. Our website and social media will show whether the Park is partially or totally open at all times. We are looking to come forward with a consultation document on new possible activities on those parts of Dinton freed up by the closure of the golf course and we plan to be providing for a much higher number of residents than were using the golf course. This will alongside plans to provide better car parking for the numbers that will be coming there and we plan to have new activities up and running for late spring/early summer. In the meantime only essential grounds maintenance will be carried out.

In parallel we realise that California Country Park is in need of some TLC, especially the car parking and access roads. This work will go forward whilst we put plans for what the country park might become, recognising the environmental and historic elements within the overall area. Much of the finance for this will eventually come from the nearby developments in the Arborfield Garrison and adjoining Marino Trust lands. Planning applications as we know have been received for both.

I can now announce that the Council has completed on the purchase of land for providing the playing pitches we need to secure for the North and South Wokingham Strategic Development Locations. This is at Grey's Farm, currently accessed from Heathlands Road, which will in time be linked on to the southern distributor road. In the meantime the farm will continue to operate under a business farm tenancy agreement until 2017. This is an exciting move, especially as the site will be readily accessible and not encroaching to the gap between Wokingham and Crowthorne.

It will give further opportunities for activity participation by our residents, a vital part of our health and wellbeing agenda as we have just heard. On that, I am delighted also that our primary schools are getting a further year of financial support to aid activity schemes. That is £9,000 per school.

I can reassure Council that all is in place for the agreed transfer and operation of Bulmershe Leisure Centre from Woodley Town Council to our leisure provider 1Life from 1st December, providing additional leisure offering at that location in the form of a gym as well as upgrading and refurbishing changing facilities and access. We are working on the issues of parking within the complex which includes both Bulmershe and Addington

Schools, the gym club, the table tennis club and goals. All this is part of the continuing investment being made by Wokingham Borough Council in Woodley and jointly with 1Life in all our leisure centres.

Lastly, the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy consultation has finished and we are studying the responses. A report and amended strategy will go to the Executive for adoption in January. We can then move to the essential next step of a comprehensive plan of the actions we can work on to further reduce flood risk, working with the Environment Agency and local partners.

Philip Mirfin, Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities

I am delighted to update Members on the progress of the regeneration since I last presented to you all. As you recall the Peach Place refurbishment above Clarks and Boots was finished in August with seven apartments being placed onto the market at that time. To date, two have been sold with a third under offer, so this is really excellent news. In general the public reaction to the refurbishment element has been good and people have acknowledged that it is a vast improvement over what was there before, especially when you look at the before and after views. Refurbishing a 1960s building was always going to be a challenge but I believe we have met it fully.

We have now had several busy months working on our final designs for Peach Place second phase, which we anticipate will be submitted to the local planning authority in early December. The outcome of our discussions which have been primarily based on the previous public consultations and 157 additional comments which were submitted to the LPA after the 2013 proposals were withdrawn is what we have started to share. Our intention has always been to provide the key organisations and residents' groups with sufficient detail of the new proposals so that during the statutory planning consultation period, they can fully engage with the statutory consultation process. The LPA have agreed that following submission of the new proposals in early December, they will allow an extended six week period, during which time all interested parties can submit their comments. We very much hope at this time that the plans will be put before the Planning Committee in mid-March 2015.

We have taken great care to involve all the most closely involved interested parties in our introductions to the new plans. We started following our press launch Tuesday last week with the principles of the Wokingham Society, Wokingham Historical Society, the Greater Langborough Residents Association, Rose Street Resident Association, Chamber of Commerce and the Town team. We have also since presented to the Rose Street Methodist Church and a further presentation to the wider Chamber of Commerce. We have received good, positive comments from all so far presented to, with their thanks for having listened to their overall views. There is real interest and pleasure in being involved as we work up the details post the planning agreement. We have plans to extend the view into our four comprehensive schools, our Town Councils, town retailers and the general public. All before the plans are submitted. Our Open Days for residents are on Friday and Saturday over the next two weekends in the Market Place in the Town Hall.

In addition once we had broadly finalised our plans we shared them with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Lib Dems several weeks ago before the press launch. Other than a question about parking they seemed to have little to criticise. However, I must say I am disappointed in the Opposition about their overall stance to the plans for regeneration. From February until now they have demonstrated a lack of interest in what is being proposed. In February our Chief Executive offered the opportunity for the Leader and

Deputy to join Conservative Members, our developer partners, Officers and architects, in a full day to review and plan a way forward. This they declined as they wanted to put their own alternative proposals forward. Having since heard about their dark store, memorial garden and plans to retain the unfit for purpose 60s buildings down Peach Street, I am very glad that they decided not to attend. However, we then gave them the opportunity to see the presentation being offered to the key stakeholders. Initially two could not make it, and then amazingly none of the Opposition were available despite being offered the same opportunity last night. My only hope is that despite the Motion that is on the agenda this evening, they have been briefed accurately by the Leader and Deputy Leader opposite so that they can join the majority in supporting the way the work is going forwards.

I would also like to confirm that it has always been our intention to consult again on Elms Field, unlike what has been put out by the position opposite, with the demise of Sainsbury's. We are also consulting on Carnival Pool but not stopping there. We launched a leisure consultation for the Wokingham town residents last week that runs until January for all ages to tell us what they want in the town. That is then followed by the Carnival Pool consultation in January/February and we will then be consulting about our proposals for Elms Field which we hope will commence from February, through March next year.

And lastly if all the above is not enough, our new Regen. website is due to be launched in the next few weeks and this will provide a one stop shop to all businesses and residents with the regeneration going forward.

John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways

I have three things which I am happy to be able to report to Council. 85% of our planned Strategic Development Locations have either planning permission or planning applications in at various stages and some are starting to be built. I can also report that we are on course to deliver the five major roads over the next 5-6 years so that is going forwards as well. We had our Community Infrastructure Levy inspected in public and it was deemed to be ok by the Inspector so that now then puts us in the position where we will have the money to develop all the necessary infrastructure to support the new development going forward.

Pauline Jorgensen, Executive Member for Resident Services

Just a couple of updates. We continue to work on improving the Borough Council's website to improve the residents' experience. The latest redesign of pages has been the Waste Service site. Residents' feedback has been very good and a few examples are 'much more user friendly' and 'quicker when I wanted to find the next garden waste collection date' and another comment 'fantastic updated page, able to find collection days easier rather having to search on various pages. Well done.' So obviously the redesign is going well and I think it is being appreciated by residents.

Following the very moving debate on defibrillators, I have taken the opportunity to email Officers about seeing whether we can get more information on the location of defibrillators on the website and also potentially to advertise the app which was mentioned by one of the petitioners. I think we can do more to help people understand how to get hold of defibrillators easily and also where they are currently located.

Our Facebook and Twitter followers continue to increase. Facebook is 7.9% up on last month and Twitter is 5% up on last month. We have got about 2,000 Facebook followers and 5,500 Twitter followers. I would really encourage everybody to follow Wokingham

Borough Council on Twitter or Facebook, whatever your poison is, as it is really good for finding out information about what is going on in the Borough, all sorts of things about libraries events, all sorts of things. So I would very much encourage anybody to follow us.

Finally, I note the Motion later on the agenda, 362, and I completely agree with a lot of the suggestions that Dee is making. Indeed almost all of them are already included in the Customer Service Programme. It is almost as if Dee had read the spec. This programme has been backed and publicised by the Chief Executive earlier in the year and it is a task we have a dedicated Deputy Executive Member working on, Alistair Auty, which shows how important we think the service is, and I would be happy to brief you about what is going on or to arrange for Alistair to do that anytime you would like.

Ian Pittock, Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services

Two announcements. I am delighted to report that we have been successful in our application to the national Innovation Programme for Children. We are one of ten authorities selected to work alongside international experts including Professor Eileen Munro, to help change the way we work with families. Members, who attended the recent seminar with Professor Munro in this Chamber, will recall the inspiring opportunity this presents to us and we look forward to involving Members further as we start the programme. This programme will help accelerate the change and improvement work already underway, leading to more effective outcomes and services for children and families. The programme also comes with a substantial grant from government.

Secondly, we are making excellent progress with the plans for the new secondary school in the South. Crest Nicholson have recently submitted the hybrid application on behalf of AGLC. This includes land for that secondary school. We are lucky to have many engaged and committed parents helping to bring the school to life and both parents and children are actively involved in the design. With the Council's takeover day occurring tomorrow giving children a chance to have their say in the new school. We will be seeking expressions of interest from education providers in December. Our own detailed planning application for the new school is expected to be submitted in the first week of January.

58. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Mayor invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

Questions submitted under Notice

58.01 Question

Guy Grandison asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Last September the Hawkedon Borough Councillors submitted a petition from residents calling for a safer Lower Earley Way. Now the cycleway has been completed can we get an update on the progress?

Answer

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken on the Lower Earley Way and we have spent nearly £2m over the last 12 months. The road now has a continuous footpath and cycle path along its entire length and we have reduced the width of the carriageway, installed traffic islands and improved the road markings. This has allowed us to reduce the speed limit to 50mph and to help to enforce this we have built two bays for the police to

park speed enforcement vans. The police have agreed to start enforcement on the road in the very near future now that the new speed limit has been in place for a reasonable period of time.

We have also implemented an interim scheme at Meldreth Way roundabout to make drivers more aware of the approach to the roundabout and reduce the drivers' speed. This includes lane narrowing and will soon include a vehicle activated sign. We are intending to carry out a more permanent scheme in the new year, once that scheme has been designed and safety audited.

Supplementary Question

I am glad to see that action is being taken on the Meldreth Way roundabout as I know the local Neighbourhood Action Group has been active on this. Can you confirm what further improvements are due to be taken and whether other groups have contacted the Council and yourself with suggestions?

Supplementary Answer

This road carries 30,000 vehicles a day and the level of accidents recorded on it is not exceptional believe it or not, but anything we can do to make that road safer, we will do. I have been working behind the scenes with Conservative councillors, both Town and Borough, in addition to working with the Police and residents who are involved with the local NAG. Hopefully, the action we take will result in the avoidance of incidents, but as I said before we will be doing a full safety review on the roundabout in the new year.

58.02 Question

Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question.

The Wokingham town centre car parking strategy was approved for consultation last October by the Executive and the decision statement says:

DECISION That:

- 1) the Wokingham Town Centre Car Parks Strategy be approved for consultation;
- 2) Officers consult on the plan and report back with the results of the consultation to a future Executive meeting;
- 3) it be noted that the financial impact of any proposed strategy following consultation will be brought back to the Executive for approval.

Reasons for Decision: To provide clarity with regard to parking requirements in Wokingham Town Centre.

The consultation closed on 13th December 2013. What has happened since?

Answer

We are intending to bring a document to the Executive in January and then we will set out the Council's plan for off street parking in Wokingham town centre.

Supplementary Question

The draft strategy had a few factual errors such as not knowing how many parking spaces there were in the car parks and it did not involve having spoken to any car park users. I am sure that you would agree that correctly priced and convenient parking is critical for the town centre to flourish. Could you explain why you are pushing ahead with the new

planning application for Peach Place that removes the Rose Street car park when you have not yet produced a proper strategy for the car parking in the town?

Supplementary Answer

We believe that there is adequate parking but as I say this is coming forward in January at which time everyone will be able to see, but I do agree with you with regards to maybe speaking to some of the residents that are using the car park and I will take that forward with the Head of Environmental Services.

58.03 Question

Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question.

In July we proposed a motion aimed at tackling the problem of inconsiderate parking in the Borough particularly around train stations and schools. It was agreed that Council would consult residents across the Borough on the policy of Civil Parking Enforcement and, subject to the majority of residents supporting the policy, decriminalise parking as soon as possible.

What have you done to progress the consultation?

Answer

We are continuing to develop our plans for civil parking enforcement. Members and Officers have met with the Department for Transport in October to discuss the project and we have engaged a consultant to assist in revising and updating the business plan for implementation but before we undertake any consultation we need to be sure that all the facts that we have can be presented clearly and logically in order for the people and residents to make an informed decision.

Supplementary Question

I understand it is a complex issue but do you have any idea of likely timescales?

Supplementary Answer

My understanding is it can take over two years to actually get it in place but that is because of the amount of work that is involved from the point we go forward with it.

58.04 Question

Tom McCann asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question.

The decision to cease the golf operation at Hurst on Monday 3rd November was made by the Executive on the evening on Thursday 30th October, an abrupt decision to close the golf course and no attempt was made to find any other way to resolve this.

Would you now apologise to the users of Hurst Golf Course for doing this and for leaving no time for any discussion or consultations?

Answer

The decision to close the golf course was not taken lightly and the detailed evidence within the report made it extremely clear that there was very little alternative if the Council did not want to incur ongoing losses on an annual basis. It was not an 'abrupt' decision, but one which was considered by the joint-party Working Group looking at our Country Parks. The combination of increasing financial losses, lack of priority to invest in the course when

balanced against our schools and other statutory services, together with no realistic return on the investment and the general decrease in demand led to this regrettable but inevitable conclusion of closure. The option to keep the course open over the winter, when use further decreases, would have entailed unacceptable additional losses so the Council had to act then. I would also add that many more people would have an opportunity for exercise within the area, as discussed with the previous Health and Wellbeing item, and I am sure that all the golfers are enjoying their exercise on other golf courses. It is another example where this administration is prepared to take tough decisions in these tough economic times.

Supplementary Question

Is it not actually the fact that through inept leadership, incompetent management, that is why golfers no longer play at that course, which is why you are now losing so much money? This golf course has generated millions of pounds towards this Council. Why have you not considered putting in things like Crazy Golf for children, a driving range, or is this just another example of your anti golfing attitude from Wokingham Borough Council?

Supplementary Answer

I am not sure how seriously to take that question but I will try to. We have agreed that we will bring forward plans which may include the items you referred to for use in this area, and I would just like to correct you on one point. This Council has never made any money on that course, or if it did, it was a long time ago and was not any significant amounts. In the last four or five years, it has been progressively unable to despite efforts to make the course as presentable as possible. I think all the other points were made very clear in the report that came to Executive.

58.05 Question

Tim Holton asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question.

Hurst golf course has been underutilised for a while now and as a golfer that is a shame. However I do welcome and so have the residents that I have spoken to, that the area is going to be brought back as an amenity facility that can be used by a much larger number of residents both young and the not so young.

Can you just tell us again when it is going to be open for use by the residents please?

Answer

As a golfer myself I regretted that we were forced to take that action. On the point of your question, Officers are working on a number of different options which I have referred to before including those outlined in the Executive report. It is hoped to bring that following a period of consultation, to test some of the options, and we hope that the area can then be open for broader use in the Spring or Summer of 2015.

Supplementary Question

I welcome that you are proposing to have a consultation. Can you tell me what format that is going to take please?

Supplementary Answer

The consultation will be both in looking for different users right across the Borough but also very much for local residents there and most especially the residents living very close in Hurst Parish who could be effected by some possible uses.

58.06 Question

Kay Gilder had asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question. The following answer was provided in her absence:

The 'My Journey' project has set out to promote alternatives to car travel. When will you know what effect this is having on the number of car journeys across the Borough?

Answer

A study into the impact of the project was undertaken in 2013 and the results were encouraging. 53% of the households in the initial personal travel planning exercise participated. This resulted in 1200 actively taking up the challenge of trying to alter their journeys by using alternative modes. Based on a before and after study of the households in the project area walking, cycling and public transport journeys have all increased whilst car based journeys have decreased.

In addition to this a series of counts of cycle use were undertaken across the 8 sites and over the last two years 2013 & 2014 we have seen an increase in cycling trips along the A329 corridor of about 11% and an increase in walking trips of almost 9 since 2013.

Further work on the project is still in progress and the Council has secured the funding for more work in 2015/16.

The project has a comprehensive assessment plan that is available to Members and residents to see and I will endeavour to make the results of this work available to Members as results are produced.

58.07 Question

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Originally there was enough money in the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to provide a cycleway this year all the way from Showcase cinema to Winnersh Farm and now there is not and the cycleway is stopping at Winnersh crossroads.

Where has the money gone?

Answer

The Council is trying to significantly improve the quality and quantity of cycle route provision across the Borough. A key element of this is the route along the A329 that we hope one day will go from Reading Borough's boundary to the boundary with Bracknell. Agreement has already been reached that this will become part of the national cycle route network.

We had hoped to be able to complete the improved route between Showcase cinema and Winnersh Farm this year. However unforeseen construction issues and costs meant that the budget did not quite stretch that far and we are curtailing our works this year at the Winnersh Crossroads.

The aspiration to continue the route still exists and as soon as the funding has been secured and the time is right we will continue to deliver the route along the A329.

Supplementary Question

Since Winnersh children are as valuable as Earley children and survivability at 40mph is not much better survivability at 50mph, are you planning on putting a fence along the new cycle way or the A329M, or is your solution just Winnersh Crossroads slowing traffic down to a crawl, having tailbacks? Which way do you plan to provide bicycle safety for children?

Supplementary Answer

I would just make the statement that safety is a prime concern of this Council. With regards to the fence, the road at Lower Earley that we spoke about earlier on when we were discussing this, it is a road which is not the sort of road that we would build today. It is a high speed old fashioned type relief road. We would not build that today and the fact that road that runs down the A329, it is already an urban road, it is a road that has a lot slower speeds, so no there is no intention to put a fence down there.

58.08 Question

Dee Tomlin asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question which was answered by the Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services in her absence:

Question

Given the negative impact of on line bullying on young people's mental health, what is the Council doing to combat the problem of on line bullying of children in the Borough?

Answer

WBC no longer controls schools, policies are for governing bodies to write, maintain and implement. These are audited by OFSTED when they visit schools in order to ensure that they do exist and that they are implemented.

However, I met this week with the Head Teacher and Head of Governors of a secondary school in this Borough to hear what actually happens in the field. The issue is mainly in secondary schools rather than primary schools because of the number of devices involved that children get as they grow older. I am sure you all know the story. Policies are in place onsite for physical bullying, which there are procedures for, and these are well implemented. With physical bullying though you get home in the evening, you close the door, that is it they cannot get at you. You get a free evening, a free weekend. Online it is different. They can still get at you behind that door because of your phone and because of your computer. There is a popular myth that what occurs in the online world is not subject to the standard rules of life but as many people are finding out right now, this is no longer true and it is being taken much more seriously. In schools they are treating this kind of bullying in the same way as they treat physical bullying. They deal with. They have procedures. If threats are made the Police become involved, it is not just laid down there in the procedure. I have asked the question have there been times where we have called the Police and the answer is yes the schools do involve the Police. Students do get advice on how to protect themselves online now as part of the curriculum. Dee, the timing of your question is impeccable as it is being posed during Anti Bullying week when there are many activities underway across this Borough to raise awareness and ensure that we are tackling bullying.

Supplementary Question

While I understand what you are saying about us not having huge amounts of power over schools at the moment we still have a responsibility on the health side. Would you not agree with me on the mental health side that we have a responsibility as this Council, so I

would still like to know what are we doing because to be honest with you schools are spending inordinate amount of time on this. I, as a teacher know how much time schools are spending but we still have responsibility on the mental health side.

Supplementary Answer

Yes, I would agree with you Dee. Our Educational Psychology service continues to deliver support to schools because we recognise this. We run a specific course which we make sure that many people actually attend and this aimed at building all sorts of resilience against bullying both physical and online. Clearly, the online bit has got some way to go across schools and across society as a whole because it is fairly new, but we will get there.

59.00 Questions on Minutes and Ward Matters

59.01 Question

Philip Houldsworth asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

We know that the major problem in Winnersh is the Winnersh Crossroads. I think it affects us all. It is a very busy road and in fact it is the busiest junction in the whole of the Borough so it is important that we sort that one as soon as we can. We do have the Officers working on a revised scheme to operate the lights and I was pleased to have a presentation about that the other day, yesterday in fact I think, and that will be introduced in December and hopefully it will ease the situation but the fact is that the crossroads are simply not up to the job. The volume of traffic is such that there is no solution without reducing the traffic. You have heard today already about the progress of the bypass and very pleased I was to hear that Bovis have finally signed the Section 106. Can we look to some advance funding?

Answer

I am very aware of the situation at Winnersh Crossroads and we have been playing around with the lights and their sequencing and unfortunately it has not always been successful. We will continue to do that. Unfortunately, pressure has been placed on that crossroads over the last few weeks because of the closing of Barkham Road and what has been going on with the link road so hopefully, and we may find this happens quite a lot, because nobody has yet told me how we can upgrade roads or resurface roads without closing some of that road off. So we will find that in some parts of the Borough, we will find pressures out on other junctions and the sequencing on some the traffic lights may not always be right, but it is something we are aware of and we will be looking at these very carefully as we go forwards with our road improvement programme.

59.02 Question

Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:

I have got a question on the minutes of the October Executive meeting for Angus. It relates to Item 71 which is the Country Parks Vision and the closure of the golf course. There is nothing in the minutes to indicate why it was necessary to take a decision on a Thursday to close a golf course on a Monday without allowing five days for the call in period. Could you explain why?

Answer

I would say that we had decided to close the golf course as soon as possible. I do not see that that action in itself would stop the five day call in period being operated.

59.03 Question

Lindsay Ferris asked the Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 29th September, the minutes are in the 3rd November at number 18 but it was agenda number 19 of 29th September. There are some quite important issues which whilst it just says they are resolved etc, there are some very important issues which I think need to come out more in the minutes than they have. The review of the effectiveness of safeguarding of children, that is the agenda item, and in it was identified that there were a number of issues and problems that we have. The first one was that the Child and Family Assessments need to be improved. The second one was the Child Protection planning process requires refining and recruitment and retention is an issue particularly of social workers. I think those three issues give significant concern of how well we are positioned to deal with problems that which could occur in that area. Would you have any comments on that please?

Answer

Actually I do not have that to hand and I actually did not recall being at that meeting. I think that meeting was one I missed, so you will forgive me if I do not give you the answer you are looking for. I will take it away, have a look at it and perhaps we could have a discussion outside the meeting. I am not sure what we can do. I am not sure whether those have actually been agreed yet those minutes. It does not stop us having a conversation and saying something at a future meeting if we need to do so.

59.04 Question

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Will you provide red light cameras at Winnersh Crossroads since the signals are overloaded and this causes more people not to stop when the lights turn red?

Answer

I think we have done Winnersh Crossroads to death. I do understand there is a problem there. You do not have to keep telling me.

59.05 Question

Dee Tomlin asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Back in the summer in Twyford, in the Wessex Gardens area, a parking survey was done on the days that the roads were shut off for resurfacing, but the parking survey people were still down there trying to count cars that were not actually there because they could not park because they were shut. Since the summer, since that debacle and that traffic survey was done, we have not heard anything about it. Do you not think it would be common courtesy to inform local councillors and local residents, after all this time? It is now November. What is actually happening to that parking survey? Money was spent on that and a company bought in to do that and we have heard nothing.

Answer

I do not actually know the results of that either and if I wanted to know them I would actually ask for them. Maybe we could discuss that outside but I cannot believe that there is not anything if they spent a couple of days down there. There must be something, must there not. I will speak to you after the meeting but there must be something must there not.

59.06 Question

Tom McCann asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

We are currently switching off lights around the Borough. I think we are over a thousand, at night where they are deemed to be safe to switch off and should emergencies happen we can flick a switch and things go back to normal. Bader Way, the traffic lights are still causing issues for my residents and I wonder would this Council or the Executive Member consider looking at ways of reducing this inconvenience at those extremely off peak times. There are examples around the world where traffic lights at non-peak times are actually switched to amber and then you treat them like a crossroads or a joint roundabout and enter cautiously, or indeed investigate about switching them off. It may even be for three hours in an evening that is not the point. Will you please look at ways of reducing that inconvenience?

Answer

The problem we have got is if the original design of the roundabout or the lights is such that they are designed to operate with lights, it is very difficult for us just to turn the lights off. We just cannot do it but I will look into it and I will speak to the Head of Highways and get his comment and get him to write to you to explain the circumstances.

60. CONTINUATION OF MEETING

At this point in the meeting 10.03pm, in accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.8, Council considered a Motion to continue the meeting beyond 10.30pm for a maximum of 30 minutes to enable further business on the Agenda to be transacted. This was proposed by Prue Bray and seconded by Lindsay Ferris.

Upon being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be lost.

61. NOTICE OF MOTION 359

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by David Chopping and seconded by Michael Firmager.

'The Community Value of Pubs

This Council notes that:

- For many people community public houses are important local community amenities that support positive interactions between people from different backgrounds and enhance community cohesion.
- The new National Planning Policy Framework makes specific reference to the need to safeguard public houses.

- The Assets of Community Value scheme introduced in the Localism Act 2011 allows local communities to secure a degree of additional protection for local community assets.

This Council further notes that:

- Effective local planning policy is a key tool in safeguarding valued and profitable public houses.
- Weak national planning rules allow public houses to be demolished or converted into betting shops, pay day loan stores, supermarket metro stores and other uses without planning permission.
- In some cases, excessively high rents and tied product prices contribute to the failure of otherwise profitable pubs.

This Council resolves:

- To develop and adopt planning policies to give stronger protection to local public houses.
- To submit, under the Sustainable Communities Act, a proposal to Government to “protect community pubs in England by ensuring that planning permission and community consultation are required before community pubs are allowed to be converted to betting shops, supermarkets and pay-day loan stores or other uses, or are allowed to be demolished.”
- To help facilitate community groups to nominate pubs as Assets of Community Value.
- To give consideration, if appropriate, to the use of Article 4 Directions to protect threatened pubs from demolition or change of use.

That the Leader and Chief Executive will write to the Secretary of State at the Department of Business Innovation of Skills supporting plans to introduce a Statutory Code to ensure tied publicans are treated fairly.’

During the debate Councillor David Lee requested that consideration be given to also writing to members of the All-Party Parliamentary Save the Pub Group.

Following debate, upon being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

Due to time constraints Motions 360, 361, 362, 363 and 364 were not considered and in accordance with Rule 4.2.8.1 were deemed to have fallen.

These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Council

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**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 2015 FROM 7.00PM TO 7.35PM**

Present:- Alistair Auty, Keith Baker, Chris Bowring, Prue Bray, David Chopping, UllaKarin Clark, Gary Cowan, Michael Firmager, Lindsay Ferris, Kay Gilder, Mike Gore, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Tim Holton, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Dianne King, Tom McCann, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Philip Mirfin, Stuart Munro, Anthony Pollock, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross, Beth Rowland, David Sleight, Rob Stanton, Alison Swaddle and Bob Wyatt

62. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Mark Ashwell, Parry Bath, Guy Grandison, Kate Haines, Mike Haines, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, John Halsall, Philip Houldsworth, Nicky Jerome, Abdul Loyes, Bob Pitts, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Chris Singleton, Bill Soane, Paul Swaddle, Dee Tomlin, Simon Weeks and Shahid Younis

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In case the matter was mentioned Councillor Tom McCann declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 60.00 Timetable of Meetings by virtue of the fact that his daughter worked for a company that did the promotion for Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration. Councillor McCann remained in the Chamber during discussions and voted on the item.

64. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received.

65. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2014/15

The Council considered a request from the Liberal Democrat Group to hold an additional Full Council meeting in January 2015 and add this into the 2014/15 Timetable of Meetings. It was also requested that a January Council meeting be added to future Timetables of Meetings in addition to those meetings currently scheduled.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group tabled her recommendation and provided an explanation of why her Group was requesting an additional meeting in January which they wished to be a permanent change for future years. Councillor Bray put forward that there were currently only six scheduled Council meetings and because motions and Member questions were not able to be submitted to the February Council meeting this led to no opportunity being available between the November and March meetings to ask Member questions and submit motions; particularly as some of the matters might be time sensitive. Councillor Bray also stated that there were few opportunities for the public to ask questions and submit petitions between November and February.

During discussion it was highlighted that there had been a need in the last two years to convene a Special Council Executive Committee in January to determine the Council Tax Base, which had to be agreed prior to budget Council, as information on this item had not been available in time for the November Council meeting. This item could be taken to a January Council meeting which would provide an opportunity for all Members to take part in the discussion.

Members also highlighted that at the November 2014 meeting there had not been enough time to consider all the motions that had been submitted to the meeting.

Members of the Conservative Group emphasised that there were actually ample opportunities to ask questions at a number of other public meetings throughout the year. These included Executive meetings, of which there were nine in a year, and also other committee meetings including, Audit, any of the Scrutiny Committees, Health and Wellbeing Board etc; provided the questions related to matters within the scope of the relevant committee. It was noted that very few Member questions were actually asked at these meetings.

It was also pointed out that the motions that had been submitted to the November Council meeting by the Liberal Democrat Group had not appeared to be time sensitive. It was felt that if the motions had been prioritised by importance, and if there had been fewer questions put forward by Liberal Democrat Members, then there would have been at least an additional 30-40 minutes available which would have been sufficient time to have considered at least one other motion.

Councillors Chopping and Cowan raised concerns that Members had not had previous sight of the recommendations put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group and that the second recommendation had not been mentioned in the agenda and therefore could be seen as an amendment to the original proposal. Due to the fact that nothing within the Constitution prohibited what was being proposed the Mayor ruled that the second recommendation was admissible. It was agreed that the Constitution Review Working Group would be asked to review the process that had been followed for this item in order to identify any changes that might be required for the future.

It was proposed by Prue Bray and seconded by Lindsay Ferris that:

- 1) *an additional Council meeting be added to the Timetable of Meetings 2014/15 and that this meeting be held on a date to be agreed in January 2015;*
- 2) *future Timetable of Meetings include a Council meeting in January in addition to those currently scheduled for May, July, September, November, February and March.*

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations were declared by the Mayor to be lost.

These are the Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of the Council

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